

47874 to 47876—Continued.

than a few degrees of frost and is successful only in regions which rarely experience temperatures below freezing." (*Wilson Popenoe.*)

47876. SOLANUM QUITOENSE Lam. Solanaceæ.

Naranjilla.

A hairy-leaved unarmed shrub, 4 to 8 feet in height, bearing large quantities of small, acid, peculiarly fragrant fruits which the Spaniards call "Quito oranges" because of their size, appearance, and flavor. They are used for salads and preserves and for making cooling drinks and ices; a little of the juice is used in the preparation of the tea called maté.

For previous introduction and description, see S. P. I. No. 42034.

47877. COSTUS SPECIOSUS (Koen.) J. E. Smith. Zinziberaceæ.

From Oneco, Fla. Plants purchased from Reasoner Bros. Received July 11, 1919.

One of the most elegant plants of this family; its stout, spirally twisted stem carries its glossy leaves and dense, showy, white-flowered spike above the brushwood in the Indian tropical jungles. It is common everywhere in India, and especially in Bengal, where it frequents moist, shady places. The tuberous, horizontal rootstock yields 24 per cent starch, and in Ceylon the poorer natives use it for food, but it is not cultivated. In some parts of India the tuber is cooked in sirup and made into a preserve. It is also used as a substitute for ginger. (Adapted from Watt, *Dictionary of the Economic Products of India*, p. 279; Hooker, *Flora of British India*, vol. 6, p. 249; and Chevast, *C. Congrès d'Agriculture Coloniale, Gouv. Gen. de l'Indo-Chine, Hanoi series, No. 2, 1918.*)

47878 to 47881.

From Auckland, New Zealand. Presented by Mr. Clement L. Wragge, Waiata Botanic Garden, Birkenhead. Received July 11, 1919.

47878. RHOPALOSTYLIS SAPIDA (Soland.) Wendl. and Drude. Phœnicaceæ.

(*Areca sapida* Soland.)

Nikau palm.

This elegant and graceful palm, found usually in thick brush, is the only species of this family represented on the mainland of New Zealand. The tree is sometimes 30 feet in height, with a smooth, polished, ringed, green stem and pinnate leaves 14 feet in length. Each tree bears two or three spathes, 13 inches long, which inclose the flower buds. The white flowers, sessile on a thick, fleshy, white axis, are followed by ovoid drupes, half an inch in length, which are a vivid red when ripe and look like a huge bunch of coral. The fruits are extremely hard and have been used for shooting birds. Although so hard, they are much relished by the wild parrots. The leaf strips are much used by the Maoris for weaving into baskets and kits of every description. The leaves are used in the construction of the native huts; a framework is made of manuka sticks, and the roof and walls of palm leaves which form a water-tight covering. The top of the stem is fleshy and juicy and is sometimes eaten. The nikau palm will stand fire almost as well as the cabbage tree (*Cordyline australis*). After a big bush fire most of the trees are killed, except the nikaus, the cabbage trees, and the fern trees. (Adapted from Laing and Blackwell, *Plants of New Zealand*, p. 84.)